

**NURS 416/NURS 494/594 /HLTH 494/594****Health Professions Study Abroad Program: Culture, Food, Environment & Health**

Number of Credits: 3

**Course Description**

The Health Professions Study Abroad is an immersion experience that is intended to expand the participants' understanding of health, health determinants and healthcare delivery from an international perspective. The program examines the impact of culture, food, and environment on health from multiple perspectives using a wide variety of learning experiences. Although intertwined and supportive of each other, focused teaching / learning and assignments will center on either cultural diversity in healthcare or food and the environment.

This Health Professions Study Abroad program also provides students the opportunity to increase their Spanish language ability in conversation as well as medical language. Students spend classroom time learning Spanish medical terms and phrases and then have observational learning experiences in health settings that provide opportunities to practice their language skills with persons seeking health services.

**NURS 416/NURS 494/594** - For students with a cultural diversity in healthcare focus, this course provides a basic theoretical framework which enables students to apply multicultural health care principles and concepts in professional practice. An awareness of cultural influence on the biological, psychological, sociological, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of the individual is developed. Specific health care values and practices of different cultural groups are identified. International health care perspectives and issues are emphasized in the recipient and provider role.

**HLTH 494/594** - Students focusing on food and the environment will examine the array of forces that affect the foods human beings eat. The factors that influence when, where and how foods are eaten as well as the issues of food production such as culture, human labor, agriculture practices, environmental sustainability, politics, animal rights/welfare, ethics, trade, religion, and psychology are explored. The class addresses the impact of current policies and actions that might be taken to improve human nutrition and health as well as exploring international and macro-scale influences on food, nutrition, and eating behavior.

**Course Dates:**

Friday, January 2, 2015 – Friday, January 23, 2015

**Travel Dates:**

Friday, January 2, 2015 – Sunday, January 18, 2015

**Instructors**

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## **Required Textbooks & Course Materials**

### **All Students**

- ❑ Composition Notebook for journaling
- ❑ Notebook and paper for class notes, homework and assignments
- ❑ Enrollment in Towson Blackboard Web site for course
- ❑ A Spanish/English Dictionary to be purchased before the trip. (*A Spanish / English medical dictionary is also highly recommended*)

### **NURS 416/NURS 494/594 -**

- ❑ Purnell, L., (2013). *Transcultural health care: A culturally competent approach*. (4th ed.). Philadelphia, PA; F.A. Davis. ISBN: 978-0-8036-3705-4

### **HLTH 494/594**

- ❑ Lappe, Anna. (2010). *Diet for a hot planet: The climate crisis at the end of your fork and what you can do about it*. New York: Bloomsbury USA. ISBN: 1608194655
- ❑ Pollan, M. (2006). *The omnivore's dilemma: A natural history of four meals*. New York: Penguin Books. ISBN: 0143038583
- ❑ Schlosser, E. (2005). *Fast food nation: The dark side of the all-American meal*. New York: Harper Perennial. ISBN: 0060838582

## **Course Information**

This course is web-enhanced through the Towson University Blackboard system. Detailed information about the course assignments, pre-departure requirements, links to information about the host country, and other course information specific to the Study Abroad Experience can be found at the course web site. Students are expected to use the site for information gathering and sharing.

## **Teaching Methods**

This Study Abroad course uses text and article readings, discussions, seminars, journal reflections, observations, class exercises, field experiences, cultural excursions, and total immersion in the Latin American culture to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

## **Course Objectives**

At the completion of the course, **ALL** students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast similarities and differences in health beliefs and practices of different cultures.
2. Describe dynamics of family as a system within a layered cultural system.
3. Integrate the cultural differences in practices and customs of the host Latin American country into interactions with the study abroad host family.

At the completion of the course, **NURS** students will be able to:

1. Identify personal cultural values and perceptions of health, illness and health care.
2. Identify concepts, beliefs, and practices regarding cultural aspects of health care and illness in diverse cultures.
3. Evaluate race, gender and class issues as powerful intervening variables in health/illness and health care delivery systems.
4. Analyze strategies that demonstrate the application of increased sensitivity, awareness, knowledge, and skills relevant to culturally congruent health care.
5. Demonstrate independence and initiative in learning about the culture and healthcare system of the host country.
6. Compare the healthcare systems of a Latin American country with that of the U.S.
7. Examine international health care issues within various health care roles.

At the completion of the course, **HLTH** students will be able to:

1. Identify personal cultural values and perceptions of health, illness and food production.
2. Identify concepts, beliefs, and practices regarding cultural aspects of food production and the implications on health in diverse cultures.
3. Compare the food systems of a Latin American country with that of the U.S.
4. Demonstrate independence and initiative in learning about the culture, food system, and healthcare system of the host country.
5. Explore a variety of influences that affect the foods human beings eat and the related outcomes connected to each influence.
6. Gain knowledge of macro-level influences that are detrimental to the food system, environment, economy and health.
7. Identify local, state, national, and global organizations related to the food movement.

### **Course Assignments**

*(See further specifications for assignments under the Assignment area in the Blackboard site)*

#### **All Students:**

- ❑ **PRE/Post DEPARTURE Questionnaire:** The student will complete a self-evaluation related to perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs regarding health care practices in Latin America, personal and professional expectations related to the study abroad experience and anticipated challenges. The self-evaluation will be completed again after the experience. *This activity is graded on a P/F basis – full credit is given for completed questionnaires submitted on time. Failure to complete the questionnaires will result in a full grade reduction from the final earned grade.*
- ❑ **JOURNAL REFLECTIONS:** The student will be provided prompts in which the student will write considered reflections related to the field experiences, cultural excursions, guest lectures or the study abroad experience in general. These journal reflections will be incorporated into the Collaborative Health Blog.
- ❑ **SPANISH LANGUAGE HOMEWORK/QUIZ:** The instructors of the host institution will prepare and give homework and quizzes related to the instruction. The instructor of the host institution will grade the work in this section and provide the grades to the Towson University course instructor. The course instructor will convert the homework / quiz grades into equitable grades for this course.
- ❑ **COLLABORATIVE HEALTH BLOG:** Students will work in small groups to document the study abroad experience. Students will focus on providing detailed information related to the environment, culture, food system and health care system in the host country. The students will take photographs during study abroad, write, edit and post blog text focusing on public health issues and events, and work cooperatively with other students to produce the blog. The evaluation criteria for the blog will be assessed in the following manner:
  - **Operational: 50%:** technical proficiency, attractiveness, accuracy, use of photos to highlight topics, group work, comprehension of text, and timeliness of postings.
  - **Content: 50%:** comprehension, accuracy, relevance, discussion, integration, compare and contrast quality

Blog posting will be ongoing during the study abroad experience. It is recommended that you type up and format your text and images in an ongoing manner and then when internet is available, posting the information at that time. The final Blog is due to be submitted one week after returning to Towson University. The final blog is expected to be proofread and formatted to a quality worthy of being showcased on the College of Health Professions website. See further specifications for this assignment under the Assignment area in the Blackboard site.

**NURS Students:**

- ❑ INVESTIGATION INTO THE CULTURE AND CURRENT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND PRACTICES In Latin America: The student will investigate and provide an overview of the culture and health practices of the host country and compare these findings with the student's own culture and healthcare practices. The analysis should include information related to current health statistics (morbidity/mortality), cost/access to care, illness prevention, and traditional/modern healthcare practices.
- ❑ PRESENTATION OF REFLECTIVE PHOTO/ARTIFACT EXPLORATION: The student will prepare a short presentation and facilitate a discussion that is centered on a photo or artifact that the student has acquired during this study abroad experience. The presentation / discussion will be aimed at developing an understanding of the cultural similarities or differences of persons in the US and the host country. Presentations will occur during a class meeting upon return to Towson University.
- ❑ CULTURAL INTERVIEW/ASSESSMENT *or* HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OR PRACTICE ANALYSIS: Students will conduct a purposeful observation and interview of a local Latin American individual or family while in the host country. Based on the assessment interview, the student will develop implications specific to the role of a health educator in the student's future profession. *OR* students may complete an analysis of a specific health care practice or healthcare system of the peoples of the host country. See further specifications for this assignment under the Assignment area in the Blackboard site.

**HLTH Students:**

- ❑ INVESTIGATION INTO THE CULTURE AND CURRENT FOOD SYSTEM AND PRACTICES: In Latin America: The student will investigate and provide an overview of the culture and food production and consumption practices of the host country and compare these findings with the student's own culture and food practices. The analysis should include information related to current food production methods, health outcome statistics related to diet (morbidity/mortality), and injury and illness prevention for food producers and consumers.
- ❑ PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF A LOCAL FOODS RECIPE: The student will prepare a culinary recipe specific to the Dominican Republic. The student will share the dish with their classmates and facilitate a discussion that is centered on the recipe that the student acquired during the study abroad experience. The presentation / discussion will be aimed at developing an understanding of the cultural similarities or differences of food in the US and the host country. Presentations will occur during a class meeting upon return to Towson University.
- ❑ CULTURAL INTERVIEW/ASSESSMENT: Students will conduct a purposeful observation and interview of a local individual or family in the host country related to their food customs. Based on the interview, the student will develop implications specific to the health benefits/implications related to these food customs.

**Graduate Program:*****NURS – Additional Requirements***

- ❑ CULTURAL COMPARISON: The student will select another country outside of the USA and the host country. The student will compare the health care practices of the selected country to traditional USA and host country healthcare practices. The student will relate the findings to their specific professional field. For example, the graduate student may investigate well baby care in the USA, the Dominican Republic, and Russia. An analysis of the cultural similarities and variances will be communicated in an academic paper of approximately 7-9 pages of content. The paper will meet graduate level requirements for analysis, APA format, and contain a minimum of 9 sources.

***HLTH – Additional Requirements***

- ❑ CULTURAL COMPARISON: The student will select another country outside of the USA and the host Latin American country and compare the food system of the selected country to the USA and Latin American food system. The analysis will be communicated in an academic paper of approximately 7-9 pages of content. The student must use a minimum of 9 reputable sources.

## Course Grading

Undergraduate credit		Graduate Credit
A = 92 – 100%	C+ = 78 – 79.9	A = 92 – 100%
A- = 90 – 91.9 %	C = 72 – 77.9%	A- = 90 – 91.9%
B+ = 88 – 89.9%	D+ = 68 – 69.9%	B+ = 86 - 89.9%
B = 82 – 87.9%	D = 60 – 67.9%	B = 80 - 85.9%
B- = 80 – 81.9%	F = below 60%	C = 70 - 79.9%
		F = Below 70%

### *For Undergraduate Credits*

Assignment	Percentage of Grade	Points	DUE Date
Pre/Post Questionnaire		P/F	
Journal Reflections for field experiences/speakers	10%	100	
Spanish Language Class homework/quiz	10%	100	
Collaborative Health Blog	20%	200	
Investigation into Culture and Healthcare System of the host country	15%	150	
Reflective Food/Artifact Presentation / Discussion	15%	150	
Cultural Interview/Assessment or Healthcare System/Practice Paper	25%	250	
Professional Behaviors/Attendance/Participation	5%	50	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000</b>	

### *For Graduate credit*

Total of the above NURS or HLTH course grade	70%
Cultural Comparison Paper (due 1 week after return)	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>

## Course Expectations

- Students are expected to interact with the Blackboard course WEB site PRIOR to and after returning from the Study Abroad Experience. A large part of the course information will be disseminated via the Blackboard site.
- Students are expected to take advantage of every opportunity to learn and practice their Spanish language skills.
- Students are expected to attend and participate in all planned learning activities. This includes the classroom lessons, field experiences, and excursions. Absences will be allowed for extenuating circumstances that are approved by the course instructor. Unexcused absences and failure to actively participate in the field experiences and cultural excursions will result in a 5-10% grade deduction.
- Appropriate professional behaviors are mandatory for the entire experience, in the classroom as well as on the field visits. Professional behaviors include proper attire, addressing others with respect, following through with assigned tasks in a timely manner, and taking responsibility for own actions and learning. This will be formally and informally assessed by the instructor.
- Field experiences to the health settings will require that students dress appropriately. This includes the following:
  - Clean shoes or sandals.
  - Shorts or skirts should be knee length. Jeans should be clean without holes.
  - Shirts that completely cover the abdomen and shoulders.
  - Modest jewelry
  - Name badge (if available) during visits to health facility settings.
- Constructive feedback about the program is welcomed and encouraged throughout the program. It is expected that students will discuss issues related to the course with the course instructor in a timely fashion so that any issue can be resolved promptly in order to facilitate learning and a positive experience.

**Towson University**  
**Health Professions in the Dominican Republic**  
**Minimester 2015**

<b>Friday, January 2</b>	Fly from U.S. to Santo Domingo. Group transfer to hotel. Welcome dinner
<b>Saturday, January 3</b>	Orientation Walking tour of city
<b>Sunday, January 4</b>	Colonial Sugar Mills visit
<b>Monday, January 5</b>	Class Guest Lecture: Introduction to Health Systems in the Dominican Republic
<b>Tuesday, January 6</b>	Morning visit to clinic or hospital Spanish Class: Healthcare Terminology
<b>Wednesday, January 7</b>	Class Guest Lecture: History of Medicine and Nurse Practitioners in the Dominican Republic
<b>Thursday, January 8</b>	Morning visit to clinic or hospital Spanish Class: Healthcare Terminology
<b>Friday, January 9</b>	Class Guest Lecture: Women's Health Issues
<b>Saturday, January 10</b>	Class Spanish Class: Healthcare Terminology
<b>Sunday, January 11</b>	Free morning Colonial Zone: Dance Son by " <a href="#">Bonye</a> " in the Ruins of San Francisco
<b>Monday, January 12</b>	Service learning (HIV patients in El Seybo) Cultural activity Group dinner
<b>Tuesday, January 13</b>	Service learning (planting and beach cleaning) Free afternoon
<b>Wednesday, January 14</b>	Class Spanish Class: Healthcare Terminology
<b>Thursday, January 15</b>	Morning tour of Hospital Afternoon service learning <i>*All participants will need to bring scrubs and nurses' uniform (if applicable) to wear during the day</i>
<b>Friday, January 16</b>	Class Spanish Class: Healthcare Terminology
<b>Saturday, January 17</b>	Free day Farewell Dinner
<b>Sunday, January 18</b>	Return to U.S.